

IMMIGRATION EVILS.

MASTER WORKMAN POWDERLY SAYS THEY ARE MANY AND SERIOUS.

THE COUNTRY OVERRUN WITH A FOREIGN AND DEGRADED CLASS WHO POLLUTE OUR POLITICS, CORRUPT OUR MORALS AND IMPOVERISH OUR WORKING PEOPLE.

Until very recently the immigration question was not considered of sufficient importance to waste time of words on, and to raise the question at all was the signal for a volley of epithets to be fired at the head of the offender. The man who hinted that immigration was assuming an undue proportion was put down as a "Know-nothing," and that charge, once leveled at a man, effectively sealed his lips or gave him no end of trouble explaining to his friends that he was misunderstood. If a man suggested that immigration was unhealthy, of an alarming nature, or in any way inimical to the peace and welfare of the people of the United States, the political life of the offender terminated immediately and artful demagogues made the most of it in order to show that the "broad, charitable spirit of Americanism was being assailed."

It is not always best to tell the truth indiscriminately, for some kinds of truth are quite unpalatable to many. The truth, or a part of the truth, once stated will set men to thinking, and while the original truth teller may be ridiculed and scoffed at, others will be benefited through his rashness.

I wish to say at the outset that I am not actuated by a spirit of Know-nothingism, of the class of animosity or even prejudice against the class of immigrants that now seek the shores of the United States. I would not do one of them an injury, and would bestow a benefit on all of them if I could; it is, therefore, on other and higher grounds that I stand when saying that the immigration to this country to-day is damaging, unhealthy, and of undue proportions, and, bear in mind, I am writing of immigration as it exists at the present day.

There was no record kept of immigration to this country until after 1820, and since that time the statistics gathered have shown that up to December 31, 1889, we have taken in over 15,000,000 immigrants, and that over one-half of that number have landed inside of the last twenty years.

Let us take a brief journey through the industrial area of the United States and note the effect of the rapid introduction of so many units to the field of production. We find that in all occupations machinery is displacing mechanics and dropping them from the top to the middle or bottom round of the ladder. It is true that one effect of the introduction of machinery will be to make skilled men, or workers, of those now known as unskilled laborers, for I believe the next twenty years will see the most slavish work done by the aid of science and machinery, and though it is but the turning of a thumb-screw or the pushing of a button that sets the machinery of the future in motion, it will require a cool head and a skilled hand to do the service. At present, however, we find the mechanics of yesterday competing with the immigrant who landed this morning. With forty Welsh citizens, experienced and skilled in coal mining, leaving these shores, and this region, and fifty inexperienced, unlettered and slavish immigrants stepping into their places, we find that the lot of others who remain is not improving. They are obliged to lower the standard of wages and living to that of the immigrant. The time was when to grow dissatisfied with the coal regions, or with a manufacturing centre, the workman could emigrate to the West and take up land on which to build a home. That day exists only in memory, for our Government has neglected to guard the heritage of the people and has squandered it with a lavish hand until the best of our acres are in the hands of or under the control of corporations and syndicates, while the lands to which the workman may go are situated so far from running streams that he cannot improve his condition by seeking "other fields and pastures new" in the United States. I am aware that our esteemed fellow-citizen, Andrew Carnegie, believes that the chances to gain access to the land are still very good, for he says:

One of the two great fallacies upon which "Progress and Poverty" is founded is that the land is getting more and more into the hands of the few. Now the only way to remedy this, Mr. Carnegie would have us believe, is upon this point is the census, and this tells us that in 1850 the average extent of farms in the United States was 203 acres; in 1860, 190 acres; in 1870, 152 acres, and that in 1880 it was still further reduced to 134 acres. The reason is obvious for this rapid distribution of the land. The farmer who cultivates a small farm by his own labor is able to drive out of the field the ambitious capitalist who attempts to farm upon a large scale with the labor of others.

WHO OWNS THE MORTGAGES. I believe that Mr. Carnegie is entirely wrong, and that his conclusions have been reached without going to the bottom of the land question. He points to the last census to show that the acreage in the hands of landowners is decreasing, and that as a consequence the "ambitious capitalist" is being driven out of the business. Had the last census done what we hope to see that of 1890 do, we would know who owned the mortgages on the farms, and we might have learned ere this that it was because the farmers were too poor to retain large farms that the latter dwindled so in size. It might have appeared that the "ambitious capitalist" found it more profitable to let go his tract of land and buy up the mortgages of those who had chased from him. A well-managed and carefully cultivated mortgage will raise a far better crop for the owner than the most fertile soil.

We have only to go to landholders, for the profits and hear what the farmers of America say to know that farming in the United States never was so bad as at present, never did so many mortgages hang over the heads of the agriculturists as at present, and never before were so many farmers anxious to part with their holdings as at present. The "ambitious capitalist," having loosened his hold on the farm, has tightened his grasp on the railroad, and squeezes all that he can out of the tiller of the soil in freight charges, after he has already taken his interest in the mortgage. Taking it altogether, it paid the capitalist well to quit farming, for competition in bonanza farming would have made it decidedly dangerous for him should he remain longer at the plough. Every farmer will tell us that 200 acres makes a better farm than 134 acres, and if he is honest he will also say that if he is rich enough he would have 200 instead of 134 acres. The diminishing size of the farms and the abandoning of the life of a farmer by the "ambitious capitalist" does not by any means prove that farming pays as well as it used to. On the contrary, we see that it is harder to make a living on land than before, and we also see farmers and farmers' sons crowding into the cities and towns, competing in the field of industry with the latest importations from the Old World. Hence it is that instead of seeking the land in the country of their adoption, and many of them the land of their birth, our workmen are going to Europe away from the land of liberty and the free because it is no longer the country that it used to be.

A gentleman doing business in Philadelphia said to me a short time ago: "Is it not a good thing to have these immigrants come here to do all the mining and other rough work? They are fitted for nothing but other rough work and they are crowded the others out of such a life and into something higher and better."

ARE AMERICANS BEGINNING TO EMIGRATE? If driving some of our best citizens out of the country can be called sending them "higher," then they are being elevated and more will follow, for within the last three days I learned of a scheme by which some 200 citizens of the United States are to secure homes in Australia. I am not taking a pessimistic view of the situation when I say that if the present tide of immigration continues for the next twenty years as it has for the last ten, we will see many of our best citizens going from the United States and the shores of Europe will be dumped on these shores in their places. Will this influx cease? Let us see. The great steamers that ply between the United States and European ports will not be discontinued, their weekly trips will not cease for want of passengers so long as cheap rates are held out as inducements. To the port of New York alone over 900 vessels are driven by steam, wind and wave each week; many of them will carry from 500 to 1,500 steerage passengers. They will not cease in their efforts to stimulate immigration, and, while avarice is as strong in the American as in any other man, there is no element of patriotism alive in the owners of vessels that will cause them to hesitate before dumping a few thousand more unfortunate on our shores. One steamship company, the Inman, has 3,500 agents in Europe and the other lines are equipped in proportion. Europe is secured by these agents and one of them told me that when abroad he made it a point to seek out the man who had committed an offence, and told him to leave that country in order to avoid punishment, by that means he sold one more ticket and pocketed one more fee. Rather than sail without a cargo of immigrants, for they make up the cargo nowadays, the poor people will be carried for a fraction over the sum required to provide them with food on the trip. Ballast costs something when men have to load it, but this quality of ballast walks in and English will be on every ship.

We hear a great deal about unskilled labor. There is no such thing as unskilled labor, for it requires skill to dig even a post-hole. Why should the calling of the railway laborer be degraded any more than that of the engineer who manages the engine? There is but one thing that causes men to look down upon the miner, the street-cleaner and the ordinary day laborer, and that is the ease with which the places of such men can be filled from the scourgings of Europe. If two employers sought for one laborer, that laborer would be the dictator as to what his compensation should be, and there would be no talk of the inferiority of his calling. Two, and sometimes ten, laborers apply to one employer, and, as a consequence, the calling of the laborer is degraded in the eyes of many. Go further: every step in reducing the standard of living and wages of the laborer reduces the wages of the skilled workmen as well. When 75 cents a day in 1890 takes the place of \$1 in 1880, each recipient of such wages must curtail his purchases, in order to conform to the 25 per cent reduction in wages. Less of food, less of clothing, not so many shoes and cheaper lodgings must be had, and those who make shoes, clothing and articles of household use find that their business falls off also; the falling off in business is followed by a reduction in wages, and the evil stream runs the entire length, until all are infected. The cheapening of labor cheapens production; cheap production cheapens human flesh, and when the race of cheapness is run we find ourselves a nation of outcasts, for each man's hand is at his neighbor's throat, seeking to wrest from him a part, or the whole, of the trade he has acquired, and his argument always is: "I can do it cheaper." The logical end of cheapness is nothing, and to that end the immigrant to-day, in his ignorance, is driving the American laborer, mechanic and business man, many of whom labored by his side across the water years ago.

IGNORANCE AND VICE IN POLITICS. Now let us look at the political side of the question and see if we are doing right by ourselves. This country would not be sought by the oppressed of the earth if it were not that we had constituted a government of and by the people. We in America know that there is no longer a government of the people in the United States, we know that Dr. Lyman Abbott was right when he said that the country now, and that we had developed the worst possible form of government on earth. Though the scales have fallen from our eyes, and we see things as they really are, we still go through the farce of holding elections, knowing all the time that the highest bidder gets the office. Others do not view the matter as we do, and we cannot blame the poor immigrant if he seeks shores that are represented to him as the edge of a free land in all that the word implies. Once landed his eyes are opened if he can see at all. If he cannot see he is dangerous through his ignorance, if he can see he is dangerous because he sees that he has been deceived, but in either event he is allowed to become a citizen at the end of five years, and his vote stands as the equal of that of the most patriotic citizen in the land. Of the 8,000,000 that landed in the last twenty years let us say that 1,000,000 alone became citizens, and that 20,000 of them took up their residence in New York State. Of that number let us estimate that in 1884 325 could not read, and that the managers of the Democratic party knew they were, and made use of them to give Grover Cleveland the majority that made him President of the United States. It could be done, and there is no doubt but what the error of more than ten years ago was a mistake. In 1884 it was an effort on the part of the Republicans to win back what was lost in 1860, and the canvass of that year was considered a "campaign of education," it is a notorious fact that many workers were hired to secure votes for the Republican party. How could they get them from intelligent, educated men? Their work must be done among the ignorant, those who could not read, and they succeeded. Who will deny that among the immigrants who landed prior to 1884, who settled in New York, 325, who could neither read, nor write, became citizens and voted for the President that year? It required more work in 1888, but the Republican party had the money and the ablest manager, and where education and intelligence were not available there was no hesitation in calling in the aid of ignorance and illiteracy. New York is the pivotal State, and as a consequence the steamship passengers on our vessels that land in 1890 may decide the political fate of this Nation in 1892. Either one of our great parties will take advantage of such chances as that; they will not hesitate to employ any means short of murder to win victory, and what murder can be worse than to trade in the illiteracy of the poor people who come here for something to eat and will vote for that man of party that will give him the best year for selling his vote in 1890, he finds few to the man who regards the ballot as being too sacred to part with for a consideration, and the man who sells his vote for something to eat cannot be blamed when we do not provide the opportunity to earn the price of food. I know that I will be censured for talking so plainly and I am sorry for only one thing—I am telling the truth.

BREAD-WINNING AS HARD HERE AS ABROAD. What are we to do? We know how the poor immigrants fare in this land; we know they cannot receive worse treatment in their own homes, we know that while they do not improve their own condition a particle by coming here, they make the condition of the workmen of this country infinitely worse. I am well aware that the worst kind of immigrant is the one who was born and raised here and who goes abroad for awhile, to bring home with him European plans for the enslavement of the masses; but I am also sensible of the fact that he is only a forgetful man, and that his ignorance and poverty. The one who profits by the immigration of the present day is the man who is already wealthy enough; the poor are being made poorer through the crowding process, and through the clipping down of their already scanty earnings. The strain is becoming too great, and among the remedies that will be suggested, I should like to forget that the aliens who are permitted to reside in Europe and own immense tracts of land in the United States are our uncompromising enemies; they find it to their interest to keep our working shiploads of the poor of Europe in the expectation that the immigrants will drive the American workman to the land which they have to sell. Allow me to say that I am not taking a pessimistic view of the situation when I say that if the present tide of immigration continues for the next twenty years as it has for the last ten, we will see many of our best citizens going from the United States and the shores of Europe will be dumped on these shores in their places. Will this influx cease? Let us see. The great steamers that ply between the United States and European ports will not be discontinued, their weekly trips will not cease for want of passengers so long as cheap rates are held out as inducements. To the port of New York alone over 900 vessels are driven by steam, wind and wave each week; many of them will carry from 500 to 1,500 steerage passengers. They will not cease in their efforts to stimulate immigration, and, while avarice is as strong in the American as in any other man, there is no element of patriotism alive in the owners of vessels that will cause them to hesitate before dumping a few thousand more unfortunate on our shores. One steamship company, the Inman, has 3,500 agents in Europe and the other lines are equipped in proportion. Europe is secured by these agents and one of them told me that when abroad he made it a point to seek out the man who had committed an offence, and told him to leave that country in order to avoid punishment, by that means he sold one more ticket and pocketed one more fee. Rather than sail without a cargo of immigrants, for they make up the cargo nowadays, the poor people will be carried for a fraction over the sum required to provide them with food on the trip. Ballast costs something when men have to load it, but this quality of ballast walks in and English will be on every ship.

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IGNORANCE AND VICE IN POLITICS. Now let us look at the political side of the question and see if we are doing right by ourselves. This country would not be sought by the oppressed of the earth if it were not that we had constituted a government of and by the people. We in America know that there is no longer a government of the people in the United States, we know that Dr. Lyman Abbott was right when he said that the country now, and that we had developed the worst possible form of government on earth. Though the scales have fallen from our eyes, and we see things as they really are, we still go through the farce of holding elections, knowing all the time that the highest bidder gets the office. Others do not view the matter as we do, and we cannot blame the poor immigrant if he seeks shores that are represented to him as the edge of a free land in all that the word implies. Once landed his eyes are opened if he can see at all. If he cannot see he is dangerous through his ignorance, if he can see he is dangerous because he sees that he has been deceived, but in either event he is allowed to become a citizen at the end of five years, and his vote stands as the equal of that of the most patriotic citizen in the land. Of the 8,000,000 that landed in the last twenty years let us say that 1,000,000 alone became citizens, and that 20,000 of them took up their residence in New York State. Of that number let us estimate that in 1884 325 could not read, and that the managers of the Democratic party knew they were, and made use of them to give Grover Cleveland the majority that made him President of the United States. It could be done, and there is no doubt but what the error of more than ten years ago was a mistake. In 1884 it was an effort on the part of the Republicans to win back what was lost in 1860, and the canvass of that year was considered a "campaign of education," it is a notorious fact that many workers were hired to secure votes for the Republican party. How could they get them from intelligent, educated men? Their work must be done among the ignorant, those who could not read, and they succeeded. Who will deny that among the immigrants who landed prior to 1884, who settled in New York, 325, who could neither read, nor write, became citizens and voted for the President that year? It required more work in 1888, but the Republican party had the money and the ablest manager, and where education and intelligence were not available there was no hesitation in calling in the aid of ignorance and illiteracy. New York is the pivotal State, and as a consequence the steamship passengers on our vessels that land in 1890 may decide the political fate of this Nation in 1892. Either one of our great parties will take advantage of such chances as that; they will not hesitate to employ any means short of murder to win victory, and what murder can be worse than to trade in the illiteracy of the poor people who come here for something to eat and will vote for that man of party that will give him the best year for selling his vote in 1890, he finds few to the man who regards the ballot as being too sacred to part with for a consideration, and the man who sells his vote for something to eat cannot be blamed when we do not provide the opportunity to earn the price of food. I know that I will be censured for talking so plainly and I am sorry for only one thing—I am telling the truth.

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